



# Islamabad POST

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**Pakistan, Iraq to work together to facilitate pilgrims**

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**France keen to further cement ties with Pak**

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**Alcaraz crushes Djokovic to retain Wimbledon title**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Shooter killed by security personnel

# Trump survives assassination bid

“We pray for the recovery of those who were wounded, and hold in our hearts the memory of the citizen who was so horribly killed,” he said, adding that it was more important now than ever “that we stand United”

NEWS DESK / DNA

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump was shot in the ear during a Saturday campaign rally, streaking the Republican presidential candidate's blood across his face and prompting his security agents to swarm him, before he emerged and pumped his fist in the air, mouthing the words “Fight! Fight! Fight!” Hours after the incident, the FBI said it had identified the shooter in the assassination attempt as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Pennsylvania, US media reported early on Sunday. Crooks and one rally attendee were killed and two other spectators were injured, the Secret Service said in a statement. Incumbent US President Joe Biden has since spoken to Trump after the incident, according to a White House Official. Biden also spoke with Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro and Butler Mayor Bob Dandoy, the official said. Trump, 78, had just started his speech when the shots rang out. He grabbed his right ear with his right hand, then brought his hand down to look at it before dropping to his knees behind the podium before Secret Service agents swarmed and covered him. He emerged about a minute later, his red “Make America Great Again” hat knocked off, and could be heard saying “wait, wait,” before agents ushered him into a vehicle. “I was shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear,” Trump said on his Truth Social platform following the shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, about 30 miles (50 kilometres) north of Pittsburgh. “Much bleeding took place.” US President Joe Biden led the condemnation after his election rival Donald Trump was wounded in an apparent assassination attempt at a rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday, in violence that also left a bystander dead. Political leaders on both sides of the aisle slammed the attack minutes after the Republican candidate was rushed off stage by the Secret Service with blood running down his face. “There’s no place in America for this kind of violence. It’s sick. It’s sick. It’s one of the reasons

Continued on Page 06

## President, PM, Imran condemn the life attempt on Trump

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has strongly condemned the attack on former US President Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania. He expressed deep shock over the attack, saying that such violence had no place in politics. The President expressed his best wishes for the speedy recovery of Mr Donald Trump and also offered heartfelt condolences over the loss of life in the attack. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned an attack on former US President Donald Trump during an election rally and expressed his deep grief. The prime minister, on X account, said that he just learnt that former President Trump was shot at an election rally. “This is a shocking development. I condemn all violence in politics. Wish the former President swift recovery and good health,” he further posted. PIT founder Imran Khan has also condemned attack on former US President Donald Trump. In his X message he said, ‘I strongly condemn the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump at a campaign rally. Political violence is a tool of cowards and has no place in a democracy’. Imran Khan also wished him full recovery.



WASHINGTON: Former US President and Republican candidate Donald Trump responding to supporters' chants by waving his fist after assassination attempt. – DNA

## Court approves 8-day remand

# Imran tells judge, You're answerable to Allah, not agencies

Couple's hopes of release dampen after arrest in new Toshakhana reference by NAB

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan harshly criticised the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman during the Toshakhana reference hearing on Sunday. At the start of the hearing, the former prime minister, who is currently incarcerated at Adila jail with his wife Bushra Bibi, objected to the absence of media, stating, “If the media is not allowed, I will walk out of the court.” The court subsequently ordered media representatives to be brought inside the jail, and the hearing commenced once they arrived. Imran Khan, recently acquitted in a major case regarding “unlawful marriage” only to be arrested hours later under a new government-filed reference, addressed the judge directly, asserting that his wife, Bushra Bibi, had no involvement in the Toshakhana case. “I have read the Qur'an four times in jail, and it places a great responsibility on judges,” he stated.

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## PTI's MNA

# 'abducted' in Lahore by unknown men

“Time for condemnations is over; it's time to resist,” says Qaiser, demanding MNA's release

KHAYAM ABBASI

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member of National Assembly (MNA) Ameer Sultan was “abducted” by unknown men in Lahore, a top party leader said Sunday. Sultan, who was elected to the lower house of the parliament when he won the elections from NA-110 in

Continued on Page 06

## K-P govt demands resignation of CEC

Spokesperson Dr Saif condemns ECP's performance, labelling it as disappointing and biased against PTI

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government has called for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and members, citing dissatisfaction with their handling of elections and reserved seats. K-P government spokesperson Barrister Dr Saif condemned the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) performance, labelling it as disappointing and biased against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Continued on Page 06

## Demands thorough investigation PM orders to reactivate Neelum-Jhelum project

Former interior secretary reports closure of the power project causing significant financial losses

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed the formation of an urgent committee to reactivate the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project. Chairing a meeting at the PM House on Sunday, Sharif reviewed the progress and challenges facing the project. A detailed briefing revealed that power generation was halted on May 2, 2024, following a pressure drop in the head race tunnels. Former federal interior secretary Shahid Khan, leading the investigation, reported significant financial losses due to the closure. The investigation highlighted that a similar issue in 2021 during the PTI regime was ignored, exacerbating the current situation. The project's construction had overlooked crucial geophysical and seismic factors, and adequate concrete lining of the tunnels was not completed. PM Shehbaz criticised the past negligence and demanded a thorough investigation to identify those responsible. He emphasised the need for immediate

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## JI protests against inflation Party to organise sit-in on July 26 in Islamabad

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman announced that JI was protesting nationwide against inflation and there would be sit-ins across big and small cities. He also disclosed about the sit-in on July 26 in Islamabad against the huge spike in electricity tariff and taxes. Public mobilisation would continue and the movement was against the anti-people budget. He said the party and public would keep protesting until their demands were not met. Government has to provide relief in the overbilling of

Continued on Page 06

## Security of Muharram processions increased

Punjab Police Spokesman said that more than 25,000 officers and personnel have been deployed for the security of 3,803 Majlis

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: On the instructions of IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar security of funeral processions, congregations and assemblies held in connection with Muharram has been increased. According to the spokesperson of Punjab Police, today, 3803 majlis are being held across Punjab including Lahore and 1375 funeral processions are being held. The spokesperson of Punjab Police said that more than 56800 police

officers and personnel have been deployed across the province today for the security of the sacred programs of Muharram, Punjab Police Spokesman further said that more than 25,000 officers and personnel have been deployed for the security of 3,803 Majlis held in all districts. More than 31,000 officers and personnel have been deployed for the security of 1375 funeral processions. Today, 98 processions and 424 majalis including 45 A-category

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## Briefs

### Sanam Javed rearrested after release

Her lawyer Mian Ashfaq confirmed her rearrest by Islamabad police

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Sanam Javed has been re-arrested by Islamabad police shortly after her acquittal in an FIA case. The district and sessions court in Islamabad acquitted Sanam Javed from FIA case. Duty Judge Malik Imran, accepting the plea from Sanam Javed's lawyers, discharged her from the case. Following the court's order, she left for home with her family and legal team. The FIA had initially requested a six-day remand for Sanam Javed. Her lawyer Mian Ashfaq confirmed her rearrest by Islamabad police on his X account (formally Twitter).

### TLP sit-in disrupt routine life

Islamabad administration started negotiations with the protesters

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: TLP Faizabad sit in disrupt routine life of twin cities residents. Faizabad sit in Stay Connected, Stay Informed - Follow SamaaTV on Whatsapp for Real-time Updates! Citizens' routine life has been disrupted as faced difficulties due to the sit-in by Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) that is being held at Faizabad – the confluence of the federal capital Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Faizabad is considered the main gateway to the capital city of Islamabad. In the past, many parties blocked the road at Faizabad besides holding sit-ins.

# Whither political scene after apex court verdict?

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI

ON FRIDAY, July 12, 2024, the Supreme Court declared the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as a legitimate political party, making it eligible for reserved seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies. While the verdict may not immediately alter the government structure or threaten the incumbent prime minister and his administration, its far-reaching consequences cannot be overlooked. PTI has ample reason to celebrate this decision, as it bolsters its presence and influence in Pakistani politics. A debate has emerged, particularly within government circles, suggesting that PTI received more than it had sought from the Supreme Court. However, this argument lacks substance. As the highest judicial forum, the Supreme Court is expected to deliver justice while weighing the pros and cons of each case. Moreover, the court has not overstepped its mandate by considering the ground realities before reaching its conclusion. This verdict reaffirms the court's role in upholding justice and reflects its commitment to a fair political landscape. If independent candidates are allowed to freely express their preferences, they are likely to join the



“When this coalition government was formed, there was an agreement between the PPP and the PML-N that Shehbaz Sharif would serve as Prime Minister for the first two and a half years, after which Bilawal Bhutto would assume the position for the remainder of the term. However, as time progressed, the PML-N reconsidered this arrangement and now intends to retain the Prime Minister's office for the full five years”

PTI. Should all independents join PTI, it would become the largest party in the National Assembly. However, PTI would still fall short of forming a government independently, as 173 seats are required for a majority. In this scenario, PTI would deserve an offer from the President of Pakistan to form the government. Nevertheless, since the President is affiliated with the PPP, a coalition partner of the PML-N, it is highly unlikely that the President would extend such an offer to the PTI. A political crisis cannot be ruled out if the independents join the PTI, making it the largest party in the lower house. In such a case, the PTI may ask the sitting prime minister to seek a vote of confidence from the house. The PPP will act as a decisive factor in this scenario. This situation would certainly put the PPP in a strong position to negotiate its terms and conditions. It appears that the PPP is not satisfied with the PML-N government. Recently, President Zardari suggested that if the PPP can help form a government, it can just as easily topple it. When this coalition government was formed, there was an agreement between the PPP and the PML-N that Shehbaz

Sharif would serve as Prime Minister for the first two and a half years, after which Bilawal Bhutto would assume the position for the remainder of the term. However, as time progressed, the PML-N reconsidered this arrangement and now intends to retain the Prime Minister's office for the full five years. The PPP appears to disagree with this change, at least for now. Consequently, the PPP would like the PTI to pressure the Prime Minister into seeking a fresh mandate from the assembly. The government will complicate matters for itself if it attempts to disallow the implementation of the Supreme Court's verdict. The ministers' statements suggest that the government might resort to undesirable tactics to prevent independents from joining the PTI. Instead, the government should pursue the legal course, which, in this case, involves filing a review. The majority of Pakistanis voted for the PTI in the February 8 general elections, and by virtue of that, the party deserved to be handed over power. However, a government was formed by forcing various political parties into a coalition, and this approach has proven ineffective. Political and economic in-

stability continue to pose significant challenges. Even friendly countries, including China, are wary of the situation in Pakistan and desire political stability to achieve economic stability. No matter if the PML N government rules for five years or the PPP takes over after two and half years, the political and economic crises are not going to end. Even if the PTI, by some stroke of luck, is able to form a government, things would not change at all because in that case the opposition would certainly not let the PTI to stand on its feet. The only viable solution to escape this quagmire is to hold snap or mid-term elections. All political parties should be allowed to participate freely, as only a free and fair election can ensure political and economic stability in the country. The people of Pakistan are the worst victims of the current uncertainty. They face a multitude of challenges, including rising prices, inflated electricity bills, lawlessness, illiteracy, and a lack of basic amenities. These issues have plagued the citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan perhaps since the country's inception. Their suffering must come to an end now.



6 wildlife protectors get national awards for exemplary efforts

Dr. Muhammad Ali Nawaz, emphasized, "Wildlife conservation is not just about protecting animals; it's about safeguarding our future"

MEHTAB PIERZADA

ISLAMABAD : A joint committee of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MOC-C&EC), the Snow Leopard Foundation Pakistan (SLF), and provincial wildlife departments here on Saturday announced the six winners of the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards 2024. The announcement recognizes outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation across Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The initiative is supported by the British government's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund (IWTCF). Sarmad Shafa, Range Forest Officer of the Gilgit-Baltistan Forest, Wildlife & Environment Department won the Snow Leopard Award in the national category. Faizan Dukhi, Range Forest Officer, and Kamaluddin, Wildlife Inspector, of the Gilgit-Baltistan Forest, Wildlife & Environment Department win the Ibeax Award and the Blue Sheep Award for their conservation and protection efforts in Gilgit-Baltistan. Two seasoned officers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, the Wildlife Ranger Syed Mussadiq Ali Shah, and the Deputy Ranger Wildlife Zahid Ahmad were declared winners of the Markhor Award and the Wolf Award respectively. The Musk Deer Award is earned by Jan Muhammad Nasir, Game Watcher, Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Department AJK. The Coordinator for the Prime Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam, praised the winners for their invaluable contribu-

tions. "These awards are a testament to the dedication and hard work of individuals and organizations who are at the forefront of wildlife conservation in Pakistan. Their efforts are crucial in maintaining biodiversity and ensuring that future generations can enjoy the natural heritage of our country." The Wildlife Ambassador, Senator Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari, appreciated the initiative and said: The importance of wildlife protection extends beyond preserving individual species. It plays a critical role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, which in turn support local communities. Wildlife contributes to ecosystem services such as pollination, pest control, and soil fertility, all of which are vital for agriculture and food security. The Senator reiterated the need for a collective and concerted effort of all segments of society in attainment of a collective national objective and fulfillment of a "National Responsibility" which being "A Thriving population of All Wildlife Species" to enlighten the Generations to come." Ashiq Ahmad Khan, wildlife expert and senior member of the committee, said: this novel initiative aimed at recognizing and rewarding the outstanding efforts of our dedicated forest rangers. This programme underscores our commitment to protecting Pakistan's forests and biodiversity and highlights the critical role that forest rangers play in this mission. He said: Forest rangers are at the frontline of our efforts to combat illegal logging, poaching, and other activities that threaten our natural heritage. Their work is often dangerous and challenging, requiring a high level of dedication and courage. The Ranger Reward Programme is designed to

acknowledge these sacrifices and provide tangible rewards for their exemplary service. The Snow Leopard Foundation's Director, Dr. Muhammad Ali Nawaz, emphasized, "Wildlife conservation is not just about protecting animals; it's about safeguarding our future. As we face the challenges of climate change, the resilience of our ecosystems becomes increasingly important. By protecting wildlife, we are also protecting the resources that communities depend on." He said the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and the Snow Leopard Foundation remain committed to supporting wildlife conservation efforts and raising awareness about the importance of biodiversity. Together, we can build a sustainable and resilient future for both people and wildlife. Well-known environmentalist and Executive Director DevCom Munir Ahmed said: "The Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards celebrate individuals and organizations that have made significant efforts in protecting the nation's diverse wildlife. This year's winners have demonstrated exceptional dedication to preserving various species and their habitats, thereby contributing to the ecological balance and sustainability of our environment." He said: In the context of climate change, protecting wildlife and their habitats is more important than ever. Healthy ecosystems act as buffers against extreme weather events and help regulate the climate by storing carbon. The preservation of biodiversity can also provide new opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, such as eco-tourism, which can benefit local economies.



KARACHI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in a meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori at Governor House. APP

Pakistan, China collaborates improving quality of medical services

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of five Pakistani orthopedic doctors undergoes a six-week training program at the Third Hospital of Hebei Medical University, Shijiazhuang, Hebei, China Economic Net reported on Sunday. This program, part of the MoU under China-Pakistan Health Corridor (CPHC), aims to enhance medical collaboration and knowledge exchange between the two countries. Supported by Chinese Orthopaedic Association, the program involves comprehensive training activities. The Pakistani doctors will participate in patient rounds, surgeries, case discussions, and academic lectures alongside experts from the hospital. This collaboration is expected to foster closer ties and improve the quality of medical services available to both Chinese and Pakistani communities. Prof. Zhang Yingze, official of Chinese Orthopaedic Association and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, emphasized the historical friendship and close medical relations between China and Pakistan. He expressed hope that the visiting doctors would gain new knowledge and skills, benefiting the Pakistani populace and further strengthening China-Pakistan relations.

'Emerging Technologies Centers' to be established at 350 schools soon

ISLAMABAD : In a bid to transform Pakistan into a global IT hub, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is all set to launch a landmark project aimed at equipping school children with cutting-edge skills in emerging technologies. According to the Ministry of Education and Professional Training, the project will establish "Emerging Technology Centres" in 350 schools across Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. The initiative is part of the government's strategic planning to strengthen its initiative to make Pakistan a global IT destination. The centres will serve as catalyst for introducing children to emerging technol-

gies such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, preparing them for the increasingly digital landscape they will encounter in their future endeavors. The project is aimed at developing skills and capacity in the IT sector, preparing students for a digital future, enhancing Pakistan's export and capability in the IT sector, and making Pakistan a global IT destination. The Emerging Technology Centres will be divided into two facilities - Class A and Class B. Class A facilities will provide state-of-the-art spaces for co-working and will also function as co-working spaces during off hours to address the challenges faced by freelancers and professionals locally. Class B facilities will provide STEM, entrepreneurship, and computer science education to 40,000 students in 320 middle, and high schools. The project is set to revitalize Pakistan's IT landscape and pave the way for a brighter future for the nation's youth. This project will be executed by highly trained 175 Tech fellows hired and trained by service providers hired through Open competitive process. The ambitious Emerging Technologies Project is being launched in line with the directives of Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif which would help equipping the students with latest technologies to compete with the digital world. APP

Court Notice

اعلانت جناب عمران اکرم صاحب... (Legal notice text in Urdu)

اعلانت جناب عمران اکرم صاحب... (Legal notice text in Urdu)

اعلانت جناب عمران اکرم صاحب... (Legal notice text in Urdu)

PIAF gains alliances for LCCI polls

LAHORE: More industrial groups and trade bodies have announced their support for the PIAF in the upcoming LCCI elections, expressing full confidence of the leadership of Mian Anjum Nisar, rejecting all other so-called groups altogether. In a large gathering, organized by Darughwala Industry Owners Association and attended by a large number of business representatives from across the city and the members of the PIAF posed their confidence for the Anjum Nisar group, assuring him of full support in the upcoming election of the LCCI. On the invitation of the former President of Darughwala Industry Owners Association

and Executive Member PIAF Shaban Akhtar, the whole leadership of PIAF, including Patron-in-Chief PIAF Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman PIAF Fahimur Rehman Sehgal and other PIAF members attended that important meeting. Hundreds of members of Lahore Chamber, executive committee members of PIAF, members of Darughwala Industry Owners Association and market presidents of adjacent areas participated in the ceremony. Speaking at the ceremony, Mian Najam Nisar and Fahimur Rehman Saigol said that the service of traders from the platform of PIAF has been going on for the past 52 years and the presence of a large number of traders and industrialists in every event is the proof in this regard. It shows that PIAF is not just a show but a name of service to the business community and the voters of Lahore Chamber make the Alliance successful thanks to the performance of PIAF Founders Alliance. In this power show, in addition to dozens of association officials, PIAF Patron-in-Chief Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman PIAF Fahimur Rehman, Mian Muhammad Ali, Rafat Malik, Abuzar Shad, Vice Chairman PIAF Nasrullah Mughal, Vice Chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, Senior Vice President Lahore Chamber Zafar Mehmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt. APP

ZRC, CDA and Jazz Joins Hands on Road Safety

ISLAMABAD: Zaman Research Center (ZRC), the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Jazz have joined hands to streamline traffic on Islamabad roads by signing a MoU in a ceremony held at Jazz Headquarters Islamabad. Prof Muhammad Zaman, head of ZRC and founding chairman of School of Sociology at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) explained that the agreement is part of HEC-funded Grand Challenge Fund project titled Optimal Use of Available Resources: A Prototype Model for Islamabad Roads. He said under the agreement, Jazz will provide the CDA with data of movement of citizens on Islamabad roads. Prof Zaman, and Syed Ali Naseer, Chief Data Analyst from Jazz, signed the document. Prof Zaman said by sharing of OD Matrix data for the population of twin cities with the CDA, the city managers will be able to identify passenger routes aptly, optimize resources and time movement of public transport. Syed Ali Naseer said his company had the largest telecom data in the country. He added that the digital data is of key importance in modern data mindset to resolve the issues in multiple disciplines through specific analysis. Prof Zaman and his team is working on plans of the project to resolve the issues like traffic congestion, planning smart parking and violation. He is the pioneer of introducing modern technology to resolve chronic problems like unsafe roads in Pakistan. DNA

Anjum Nisar advocates rupee payments to IPPs

BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar also supported the government stance of the audit of dozens of Independent Power Producers agreements established during the last 30 years

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD : The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI)'s Businessmen Panel (BMP) has stressed the need for revisiting terms of power purchase agreements with a view to restore the viability of country's energy sector, as billions of rupees could be saved by making payments to IPPs in local currency instead of dollars. The FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar also supported the government stance of the audit of dozens of Independent Power Producers agreements established during the last 30 years, after a Senate penal chief termed the contracts of IPPs as dauity, seeking project-wise details including heat rates and regional comparison of price of the same technology. He said that Pakistan has been facing a high infla-

tion for the past couple of years partly due to massive depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar and partly due to a surge in global commodity prices like energy cost. The country largely meets its energy demand through expensive imports. He stressing the need for putting the economy on a sustainable growth trajectory by providing incentives to the industry, lamented that the economy is facing multiple challenges of falling exports, high inflation, low growth and declining foreign reserves, with fiscal accounts under immense pressure on account of heavy interest payments. Businessmen Panel (BMP) chairman said that the drop shows the government would find it difficult to achieve the industrial growth and export target, leading to more pressure on foreign exchange reserves of country. The FPCCI former president said that in view of decreasing cost of production and lessen energy tariffs, the government should bring some major changes in the agreements with IPPs, who are earning high profits due to certain terms and conditions of their agreements. He further disclosed that the high cost of power tariff was due to a host of factors, including snowballing capacity payments, net hydel profit, transmission constraints, minimum plant factor provision for RLNG based plants, gas price anomalies and financing cost of circular debt. The FPCCI former president said that Pakistan pursued an aggressive policy to add power capacity, but years of slow economic growth, power theft, and under-investment in transmission and distribution networks have meant that bill recovery has not been at par. He said that most IPPs had an investment payback period of 2-4 years, profits generated were as high as 18.37 times the investment and dividends 23 times the investment and under the 1994 Power Policy, 16 out of 17 IPPs invested a combined capital of Rs52 billion and earned profits in excess of Rs417 billion. The governments' failure to contain the circular debt had cost the country over Rs5,082 billion in the past 15 years, with an annual loss of Rs370 billion. Mian Anjum Nisar added that restoring energy sector viability requires strong cost-side reforms, including continuation of efforts to improve transmission infrastructure, better integration and expansion of renewable energy capacity, improving DISCO performance via either privatisation or long-term management concessions, moving captive power demand to the grid, revisiting, the terms of power purchase agreements and continuing to convert publicly-guaranteed PHPL debt into cheaper public debt.

China-Pakistan to introduce eco-friendly solar e-bikes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Road King, a leading electric scooter brand in Pakistan, and AGAO Solar Mobility, a China-based startup specializing in solar-powered scooters, reached a preliminary cooperation agreement to introduce eco-friendly solar e-bikes to Pakistan. Solar scooters are eco-friendly electric scooters equipped with solar panels. These panels harness solar energy to charge the scooter's battery, reducing the need for traditional charging. "The combination of solar energy and scooters is dedicated to short-distance travel with zero carbon emissions," said the Chinese company, according to China Economic Net. During the meeting, both sides engaged in detailed discussions on Pakistan's local transportation market demand, product development trends, and specific cooperation modalities. The Chinese company expressed its willingness to provide Road King with technical support, product optimization, and marketing assistance for solar e-bikes.

Dir launches strategic initiatives aligning research with practice

STAFF REPORTER

TIMARGARAH: The Dir Think Tank (DTT) and Dir Overseas Pakistani Association (DOPA) have jointly initiated actionable research in multiple sectors by working with top national and international universities for strategic development in Dir. In this regard, members of academia and teaching faculty from six universities including universities in Dir, Private, Public, and international have taken the lead on these actionable research and analysis. The key sectors identified for research and analysis are Human Capital Development, Tourism Indus-

try, Mines and Mineral Industry, Fisheries & Wildlife, Agriculture Industry and Peace in the Region. These actionable research and analysis initiatives will provide practical, useful, and applicable findings to facilitate and inform in decisions making, guiding policies, and leading to tangible outcomes. In addition to academia, the other stakeholders for these research and analysis include policymakers, investors, practitioners, businesses, communities, and influential individuals. Esteemed professors namely Dr. Hanif Yousufzai from University of Malakand, Dr. Sadeeq Ur Rehman from Abdul Wali Khan University, Dr. Zul Kamal from Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU), Dr. Atiq Ur Rehman from Higher Colleges of Technology (UAE), Dr. Fayaz Ali Shah from Islamia College University and Dr. Wali Rehman from Sarhad University will be leading these sector specific researches. Founder of DTT and DOPA, Rahim Shah Akhunkhail while commenting on the development said, "I am grateful to these honorable professors for leading these researches which could be decisive to the development of region by highlighting the strategic importance of Dir and attracting investments."

Advertisement for General Practice Healthcare Centre. Includes a grid of medical services icons (General Physicians, General Surgery, Neurology, Plastic Surgery, Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation, etc.), contact information (+92334 747401), and a slogan 'Keeping you Healthy!'.



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JULY

July 01/Japan  
Self Defence Day

July 01/Singapore  
Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada  
National Day

July 01/Somalia  
Independence Day

July 04/USA  
Independence Day

July 05/Algeria  
Independence Day

July 09/Argentina  
Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia  
Revolution Day

July 14/France  
National Day

July 15/Brunei  
Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium  
National Day

July 20/TRNC  
Independence Day

July 23/Egypt  
National Day

July 26/Cuba  
National Day

July 26/Liberia  
National Day

July 30/Morocco  
National Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133  
Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

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RGH.....9290301-7  
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## Water Tank

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# Pakistan, France reiterate resolve to further cement bilateral ties

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey and Pakistan's Minister for Privatization, Investment Board, and Communications Aleem Khan reiterated their dedication to fostering the friendship between their two countries

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The French Ambassador to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, hosted a reception to mark France's National Day, known as Bastille Day, or "le Quatorze Juillet" in French, commemorates the storming of the Bastille prison on July 14, 1789, a significant event in the French Revolution symbolizing the fight against oppression and the birth of a republic based on liberty, equality, and fraternity. A large number of guests from various walks of life attended the event, including PPP leader Sherry Rehman and Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori. The French Ambassador expressed his commitment to strengthening bilateral ties during the celebrations in Pakistan. The event underscored the importance of the historical and cultural connections between France and Pakistan. Ambassador Galey highlighted France's support for Pakistan's development initiatives, particularly in sustainable energy, infrastructure development, and vocational training. He also emphasized the significance of cultural exchanges in enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation.



ing mutual understanding and cooperation.

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey and Pakistan's Minister

for Privatization, Investment Board, and Communications Aleem Khan reiterated their dedication to fostering the friendship between their two countries. The celebration mirrored the festivities in France, including the grand military parade on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, showcasing the shared values and solidarity between the two nations.

Privatization Minister Aleem Khan, who was a chief guest on the French National Day highlighted the importance of strong economic and trade relations between Pakistan and France. He reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to working closely with France to explore new areas of collaboration, especially in trade, education, and technology. "The friendship between Pakistan and France is not only based on cultural ties but also on economic cooperation. We are dedicated to expanding our trade relations and exploring new opportunities for collaboration," he said. Privatization Minister Aleem Khan expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-France relations, emphasizing the need for continuous dialogue and cooperation.

# PFF NC, PFRA discuss refereeing development in Pakistan

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalisation Committee (NC) and Pakistan Football Referees Association (PFRA) have engaged in extensive deliberations aimed at laying a solid foundation for the future of refereeing in Pakistan. The primary focus of the meeting was to align the PFRA constitution with the PFF statutes to ensure cohesive and standardized

operations moving forward, said a press release. The discussions were headed by Chairman NC Haroon Malik in Lahore who was accompanied by NC member Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar who is also the chair of the PFF referee committee. The PFRA delegation was headed by the President Muhammad Shafiq. During the meeting, several critical aspects including governance, training, and development pro-

grams for referees across the country came under discussion. The primary objective was to establish a framework that aligns best practices and enhances the quality and consistency of refereeing in Pakistani football. President PFRA Muhammad Shafiq also expressed his gratitude to Chairman Haroon Malik for his continuous support and dedication to the development of referees. Chairman Haroon Malik reaffirmed his

dedication to enhancing the standards of referees in Pakistan. He highlighted the efforts between the PFF and the PFRA, emphasizing the importance of sustained support and development programs for referees to elevate the standards of football officiating in Pakistan. He assured PFRA of PFF NC's dedicated support and outlined comprehensive plans to offer future training and development opportunities for referees.

# Flour Mills delegations holds talks with govt officials

## MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Pakistan Flour Mills Association, led by Central Chairman Asim Raza Ahmed and Tax Committee Chairman Farrukh Shahzad, met today with the high-level committee established on the directive of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The meeting took place in Islamabad. The committee members included Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Amjad Zubair Tiwana. The delegation addressed the committee regarding the ongoing strike, the imposition of withholding tax, and its repercussions on the industry and the public. The committee listened to the concerns presented by the Flour Mills Association representatives and agreed to collaborate on finding a solution. The committee members assured the delegation that a positive resolution would be achieved by July 22, 2024. In light of this assurance from senior government officials and in respect for the sanctity of Muharram ul Haram, the nationwide strike by flour mills is postponed until July 22, 2024. Starting tomorrow, Sunday, the flour milling industry will resume normal operations nationwide, ensuring the supply of wheat products to the market. The office bearers of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association expressed their gratitude to Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the committee members. They also acknowledged the special cooperation of the Chief Minister of Punjab and the Minister of Food Punjab.

# IRSA releases 304,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 304,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 345,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1524.20 feet and was 126.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 186,200 cusecs and 163,400 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1194.60 feet, which was 146.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 34,500 cusecs and 16,400 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 199,800, 181,800, 152,000 and 86,900 cusecs respectively.—APP

# Digital Economy - a technological tool to unlock Pakistan's growth

ISLAMABAD: With a growing youth population, increasing internet penetration and thriving startup ecosystem, Pakistan is poised to become a significant player in digital economy and achieve the goal of national growth and prosperity. However, experts have underlined the importance of strengthening digital infrastructure to exploit its true potential and lead the country towards sustainable development. The Information Technology (IT) is one of the top sectors to lead digital economy. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan (2023-24), the IT industry currently generates an annual export of around US\$ 2.6 billion and to achieve the ambitious target of yearly exports of US\$ 15 billion in next five years, at least 200,000 proficient and specialized IT professionals are necessary. "We need to strengthen IT infrastructure and produce skilled manpower to take full advantage of the potential existing in digital economy," said Chairman Pakistan Information Technology Industry Association (PSHA), Muhammad Zohaib Khan. Highlighting importance of building the sector on modern lines to meet international standards, he also underscored the importance of improving digital infrastructure and increasing internet connectivity. The present coalition government is paying special attention towards information technology (IT) and had earmarked over Rs 79 billion for it in the budget 2024-25, the highest allocation in country's history. "The sector is expected to touch \$3.5 billion exports this year and the government is planning to enhance its exports to US \$7 billion in years to come," asserted Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb while highlighting the importance of this sector in his budget speech. "Over Rs19 billion would be utilized for establishing IT Park in Karachi and a Technology Park in Islamabad. In addition Rs two billion would be spent for Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Rs 20 billion are for Digital Infrastructure Information," the minister added. There is no denying the fact that during past decade, Pakistan has witnessed a significant increase in internet penetration, with internet users growing to 111.0 million at the start of 2024, stated Data Portal, a website publishing Global Digital reports series. It says Pakistan was home to 71.70 million social media users in January 2024, equating to 29.5 percent of the total population. A total of 188.9 million cellular mobile connections were active in Pakistan in early 2024, with this figure equivalent to 77.8 percent of the total population. President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri said that IT exports reached more or less to around US\$ 2.5 billion during fiscal year 2023-24, which he said was likely to reach US\$ five billion in next two years.—APP

# Admin finalizes arrangements for 3,958 Majalis

RAWALPINDI: The Administration on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak has finalized all the arrangements including security for 3958 Majalis and 714 processions of Rawalpindi Division. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, six companies of Army, Rangers and extra police would remain on duty till Ashura to deal with any emergency situation. He informed that close circuit TV (CCTV) cameras had been installed for full monitoring of category A processions. He said that a delegation of the Punjab Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, during a briefing was informed that three-tier security had been laid out to protect processions, including metal detectors, walk-through gates and physical checking. The delegation of the cabinet com-

mittee, headed by Cabinet Committee Chairman and Punjab Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, reviewed all the arrangements. Khawaja Salman Rafiq directed the authorities concerned that a zero-tolerance policy should be adopted towards any violation of the code of conduct of Muharram, adding that the scheduled time and route of the procession should be followed strictly. He said on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, the government was making arrangements for 'Saabeels, Niaz and Langar.' Apart from foolproof security arrangements, peace committees were mobilised for interfaith harmony, he added. The health authorities had been directed that best possible arrangements should be made to deal with any emergency. He informed that apart from

monitoring loudspeakers and social media, audio and video recordings of Majalis and processions were being compiled. The cabinet committee urged members of the peace committee to resolve mutual disputes together so that no one got a chance to disturb peace. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Aamir Khattak said that the arrangements for 3,958 Majalis and 714 processions had been completed in Rawalpindi Division, and orders were issued to ban the entry of 227 firebrand speakers. As many as 133 people were included in the fourth schedule in Rawalpindi. He said, the procession routes were cleaned, patchwork and road repair work were carried out and hanging electric wires were fixed. Apart from this, he said coordination with scholars of all schools of





## Briefs

## Hospital on high alert for Ashura

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: On the instructions of Prime Minister's Coordinator for Health, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Bhart, all four federal hospitals have been placed on high alert to ensure the provision of preventive medical facilities during Ashura. Dr. Bharath has directed the hospitals to implement special preventive measures in advance of Ashura. This includes ensuring the availability of all necessary medicines in emergency departments. Hospital heads have been instructed to ensure all essential arrangements are in place. This includes maintaining vacant beds in a ready state to handle any emergencies that may arise. Doctors and paramedical staff will remain vigilant to provide the best possible medical facilities. Special emphasis is being placed on the readiness and availability of medical teams. Dr. Bharath emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate stocks of blood from various groups to meet any urgent needs. These proactive steps are being taken to ensure the health and safety of the community during the Ashura observances. The Ministry of Health, under the guidance of Dr. Bharath, is committed to providing the highest level of medical care and support during this important time.—APP

## Climate change fund established

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: On the direction of Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, Capital Development Authority (CDA) has established a Climate Change Fund, a first in the history of Islamabad, to mitigate the affects of climate change in the ICT. CDA has set up a special fund under the Climate Change Initiative to combat environmental degradation. Interior Minister commended Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and his team for taking the lead in establishing the fund. "The CDA team deserves accolades for this initiative," he said. Under this initiative, a "Carbon Credit Program" will also be launched in the city. The program aims to plant 4 to 5 million trees in designated areas spanning 2000-10,000 kanals. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that the designated areas for tree plantation include new sectors, avenues, and other open spaces. Additionally, the "Margalla Hills Fund" has also been approved for recreational spots in Margalla Hills. The fund will designate 1.5 per cent of the revenue generated from these spots for the protection and beautification of Margalla Hills.

## APNS body wants fair distribution of govt ads

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Metro B Publications Committee of the APNS was held in Islamabad presided over by Chairman of the Committee Mr. Faisal Zahid Malik. The Chairman thanked the members for attending the meeting and hoped that the Committee will consistently put up their best efforts to solve the problems faced by the newspaper industry. The members thoroughly considered the basic problems faced by Metro B publications with special reference to financial issues which were crucial for the survival of newspapers. The member recommended that the APNS should prioritise to arrange seminars to train the newspaper publishers and their staff to launch their digital editions. It was also suggested that to solve the problems faced by Metro B publications in procurement of ads, special committees be formed in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore to coordinate with the respective information departments of Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: People busy in fishing at Rawal Lake in the Federal Capital, fishing increased after a decrease in water level in the Rawal Lake.—Online

## Allowing new IPPs despite surplus electricity criticised

Many IPPs are kept closed but paid billions of rupees in capacity payments. According to a report, sixteen IPPs have received payments totaling Rs 415 billion up to 2020, and this process is still ongoing. These 16 IPPs had invested a total of Rs52 billion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stated on Sunday that new IPPs are allowed despite the country's power generation capacity being much higher than consumption. He said permitting and constructing new IPPs is a bad idea and contrary to national interests. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that an immediate ban should be imposed on the construction of all types of private power plants in Pakistan.

He added that while certain influential sections of society benefit from private power plants, the people and the economy suffer. The business leader said that the power generation capacity is forty-five thousand megawatts. Still, the transmission capacity is only twenty-six thousand megawatts. Despite this, efforts to boost generation capacity and neglect the upgrade of power transmission is a grave mistake that will further harm the fragile economy. He said that our experts either cannot negotiate with investors or make such agreements for personal interests, which makes them pro-

perous. Still, the people become miserable, and the country goes bankrupt. He noted that Pakistan buys very expensive electricity compared to neighboring countries, and new scam records are being set. Still, no action has ever been taken against the people involved. The general public is told that IPPS receives 17 per cent of profits in dollar terms. When measured in rupees, many preferred IPPs receive between 40% and 87% of profits. Many IPPs are kept closed but paid billions of rupees in capacity payments. According to a report, sixteen IPPs have received payments totaling Rs

415 billion up to 2020, and this process is still ongoing. These 16 IPPs had invested a total of Rs52 billion. Shahid Rasheed Butt asserted that no nation agrees to provide investors with a seventeen percent profit in dollars at zero risk, nor does it offer a profit in dollars to those investing in local currency. Furthermore, no country pays 100% capacity charges, but Pakistan has done so for obvious reasons. He questioned the rationale behind setting up an imported coal plant in Sahiwal, noting the impracticality of such projects operationally and environmentally. He suggested that such plants

should be located near ports. The cost of imported coal was initially Rs 3 per unit. Due to the devaluation, it has increased to over Rs 12 per unit. The government must switch power plants from imported coal to local coal, which could save consumers Rs2 per unit, as four plants in Jamshoro, Sahiwal, Port Qasim, and Hub use imported coal. According to Mr. Butt, all agreements guarantee that the elite reap the benefits while the people shoulder the full burden. He said that the country would face default if the IPPs established under CPEC demanded payment of outstanding dues.

## RCCI urges FBR to withdraw WHT

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A consultative meeting was held at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) on the current flour crisis, and the Withholding tax deadlock between the Flour Mills Association and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The purpose of calling the meeting was to review the situation arising out of the nationwide strike of flour mills and to play a role from the platform of the chamber to resolve the withholding tax deadlock between the flour mills and the FBR authorities.

The participants including representatives from the Flour Mills and RCCI leadership have shown grave concern on the newly imposed 5.5% withholding tax on flour mills and the additional 2.5% taxes on flour sales to wholesalers and retailers and feared that this will significantly increase the cost of flour by approximately Rs8-10 per kilogram. If the withholding tax is not withdrawn,

the price hike will have a direct impact on the poorer sections of the society who are already suffering from exorbitant electricity bills. Moreover, the government's decision to make flour mills tax collection agents for the FBR has added an undue burden on the industry, complicating their operations and exposing them to potential legal and logistical challenges, they added. President RCCI, Saqib Rafiq, group leader Sohail Altaf and former chairman Flour Mills Association Riazullah Khan, Tariq Sethi, Khawaja Imran, Chaudhry Afzal, including former presidents Asad Mashhaddi, Kashif Shabbir, executive committee members and representatives and chamber members of Anjuman Tajran were also present in the meeting. After the meeting, President Saqib Rafiq, along with the representatives of Flour Mills Association, while briefing the media in a press conference, said that Rawalpindi Chamber has raised its voice on every important issue including electricity bills,

budget. He said that the platform of the Rawalpindi Chamber is available to resolve the dispute between the Flour Mills Association and the FBR. Government should have constructive talks with flour mills, group leader Sohail Altaf said that the business community is worried after the budget, the government should meet with flour mills and resolve the issue, Rawalpindi Chamber is ready to play a role to solve the flour crisis. Former Chairman Flour Mills Association Riazullah Khan said that flour mills have been on strike for three days, we have been taxed unnecessarily, we will not become holding agents. Rawalpindi Chamber has assured that we are with you, may the government withdraw this decision otherwise it is not possible to do business. Kashif Shabbir said that we will not become withholding agents for FBR to collect the tax and added that the stakeholders are not taken into confidence while imposing such irrational taxes.

## ICCI President voices concern over unjust hike in power tariffs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of the Islamabad Chamber of



Commerce and Industry, has expressed concerns that the government's decision to increase electricity prices four times in just ten days to appease the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is both alarming and extremely harsh on the poor. This escalation in prices is mak-

ing it increasingly difficult for people to sustain their livelihoods, and traders and industrialists are being deprived of their right to conduct business. He pointed out that the government's policies are detrimental to business expansion, investment, unemployment reduction, inflation control, and achieving tax targets, which raises questions about how the government plans to collect taxes when

the economy is faltering. Addressing a business delegation at the Chamber House, Bakhtawari criticized the government for not consulting the business community before finalizing the budget, leading the country towards an economic crisis. He highlighted that inflation has left people struggling to pay utility bills, and the government is not targeting those who should be paying taxes, resulting in severe exploitation. He condemned the exemption given to tax defaulters, tax evaders, electricity thieves, and failed government institutions, which places the burden of their extravagance on taxpayers and the general public. Bakhtawari noted that while the government has announced relief for users of 200 units, it has paradoxically spent millions on its publicity.

## NGIA ready to be opened: Ahsan Iqbal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) is ready to be opened and hoped that this airport would become an important hub of air transportation and a gateway to connect different regions in future. The New Gwadar International Airport has been gifted by government of China to the people of Pakistan in general and people of Gwadar particular and it will stand as a monument of Pakistan-China friendship," he told APP during his official visit of China. Terming the airport as another milestone and flagship of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the minister hoped that with the training that Pakistani staff will get in China, this airport in future will become an important hub of air transportation and it will become a gateway to connect different regions. As skilled manpower is a key prerequisite for the operation of the NGIA, 20 Pakistani officials of the airport have embarked on their "Multi-disciplinary Training Courses" in China. Under the Training Program, China Airport Construction Group will transfer technical and hands-on knowledge to Pakistani staff to run airport operation independently. This is the first-of-its-kind human resource training courses aiming to hone the technical, administrative and managerial expertise of the staff of NGIA, the Chinese media reported. The NGIA consists of 32 components such as a state-of-the-art runway, aprons, a terminal, along with civil, technical, electrical and communication infrastructure and allied facilities. The Pakistani staff of the airport is receiving professional training courses from Chinese officials who installed and activated the entire airport system. According to an official, the Government of Pakistan did not bear any cost for the training as all the expenses incurred have been executed under China Aid.

## Pak delegation to take part in China trade fair

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of 25 Pakistani businessmen will participate in the 8th China South Asia Exhibition Kunming in China from July 23 to 28 along with representatives of top industries of the country. About 80 countries, regions and people associated with international organizations are participating in the six-day event. On behalf of China South Asia Expo, founder chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas has been specially invited to participate in the exhibition along with the delegation. To participate in the exhibition, Chairman Khurshid Barlas along with a delegation of 25 members will participate in the exhibition from 23rd to 28th July. During the conversation, Khurshid Barlas said that the delegation will take people associated with tourism, education, private developers and other sectors. Meetings have been scheduled with personalities from various sectors in China. And the Pakistani delegation will also be given a visit to the facilities equipped with modern technology related to light engineering, textile, pharmaceuticals, solar, joint conferences and MoUs will be signed with Chinese investors. Which will prove to be important in strengthening the economy between Pakistan and China. Prime Minister's visit to China yesterday Scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries gave a boost to Pakistan's scientific, tourism and technological development.—DNA

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## From Auschwitz to Gaza

ON 4th October 1943, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, police, and Reich Minister of the Interior, gave a speech to a group of black-clad SS leaders in the Polish city of Poznan. It is a long speech in which Himmler gives free rein to his racist views after delivering a hate-filled tirade against Slavs in general and Russians in particular. Himmler's main focus here is on the Soviet Union and its peoples, and the course of the war on the Eastern Front. He recounts banal, purportedly humorous, racist anecdotes about the inferiority of the Russians and the Asian "sub-humans", and admonishes the audience that "we" should not lose our [German] sense of humour despite the brutal war! At a certain point, he discusses the subject of the Jews and their fate, which lies in his and the SS's hands. This speech is regarded by historians as a key document, because, in it, Himmler speaks quite openly about the genocide and extermination of the European Jews and praises the SS for their harsh, brutal actions in the occupied territories, portraying the massacre as the "never written and never to be written glorious page of SS and German history". Himmler verbatim: "I also want to speak to you here, in complete frankness, of a really grave chapter. Amongst ourselves, for once, it shall be said quite openly, but all the same we will never speak about it in public. [...] It was a matter of natural fact that is alive in us, thank God, that we never talked about it amongst ourselves, that we never discussed it. Each of us shuddered and yet each of us knew clearly that the next time he would do it again if it were an order, and if it were necessary. I am referring here to the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people. This is one of the things that is easily said: 'The Jewish people are going to be exterminated,' that's what every Party member says, 'sure, it's in our program, elimination of the Jews, extermination - it'll be done.' [...] Most of you men know what it is like to see 100 corpses side by side, or 500 or 1,000. To have stood fast through this - and except for cases of human weakness - to have stayed decent, that has made us hard. This is an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory in our history..." [bold script mine] If one reads the entire translated transcribed text of this speech carefully or listens to it (some of it is also available in video or audio form), the thought might suddenly occur to one that history is repeating itself in today's political arenas - because of certain obvious parallels and similarities... as well as a significant detail that shows a difference in their representations. The postmodern irrationality of fascist thinking back then is unmistakably recognisable in the words and actions of certain Western (especially Israeli, German, and American) politicians and elites today. [Examples are in the Appendix below.] Yes, the Nazis were afraid to speak openly about their genocide in public, and the population also kept their mouths shut - or at least covered their mouths with their hands. The fear of the Gestapo was too great and the trust in their own rulers and their ideology and politics too deep ("if only the Führer knew"... "the German people are decent folk, they don't do such things"... "it's all Jewish propaganda", etc...). Even when Hitler was present, it was forbidden to mention the extermination of the Jews. The Führer found it distasteful.



## NATO and myth of civic peace

THE state could conceive of itself as the state of the only possible civic peace, but only at the price of a real ideological and theoretical mutilation based on the unstinting will to mask the class nature of power in order to maintain the fiction of the division of powers, or the illusion of the primacy of formal, individual liberty over the public freedoms - Anouar Abdel Malek Since October 7, after 9 months of the genocide in Gaza and the violence wrought upon protesters in Western capitals who dare to challenge Zionism and imperialism, we are still presented with the 'ideological and theoretical mutilation' of the concept of state power in NATO countries. We are told that we are living in Karl Popper's "open society" where there is civic peace and that NATO countries are the most moral, the most peaceful, and the most advanced. How did this come to be? One particularly strong answer comes from the work of Anouar Abdel Malek, and his classic work Nation and Revolution. This article will explore and analyze Abdel Malek's work in relation to State power in NATO countries, the armed struggle against imperialism, and thus how the illusion of 'civic peace' in the West fuels violence in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and then pathologizes it when the violence is turned against the West. As mentioned before, Palestine is one particularly illuminating case study, while the newly formed Confederation of the Alliance of Sahel States is another. In Palestine, there has been resistance against foreign colonialism since the early 20th century. Abu Jildeh and Al Armeet, along with Izz al-Din al-Qassam and the Black Hand are some of the earliest folk heroes of resistance. Today, the eponymous Al-Qassam Brigades and their leader Muhammad Deif, fight alongside communist, nationalist, and Islamic forces against Zionist colonialism and its imperial sponsors. The United States—as the premier imperial regime—has a vested interest in maintaining the Zionist colony in order to secure the flow of wealth towards the centers of power in Washington, London, Brussels, and Paris vis-a-vis oil, weapons, and rare minerals. One key strategy of the imperialist powers is to maintain the illusion of civic peace—this is done in two ways. Firstly, by creating a scenario whereby the majority of kinetic wars and imperialist violence are conducted abroad. Secondly, any attempt at national liberation, decolonization, and socialist construction by means of armed struggle is demonized by the NATO stenographers in the mainstream media. These two tactics of imperialism serve multiple functions; the citizens of the imperial core are able to access cheap commodities and finished goods, while the origin of these goods is obscured through the ideology of "just-in-time production". In a sense, this creates a weltanschauung among the people that the world has been created for them, blinding them to the violence necessary to maintain this status quo. The central function of these tactics is, as Abdel Malek said, to obscure class power in NATO countries. In the case of Palestine, this is done by suppressing analyses by Palestinians and communists which point to Zionism as a class position.

# Harnessing China's ascent for Pakistan's economic and strategic advancement

Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (R)

CPEC is a game-changer and must be treated as such. The development of necessary infrastructure in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) has faced delays. To fully leverage these SEZs, it is essential to create opportunities for both domestic and international investors. Establishing these areas / zones in Pakistan can drive growth and create jobs, benefiting the local economy. Pakistan must also strengthen itself internally to attract more investment. Typically, economic difficulties deter investors, as no international organisation deems it viable to invest in a volatile environment. There have been unfortunate instances of companies relocating from states facing economic challenges

OVER the past four decades, China has gradually risen to become a major power on the global stage. The Chinese leadership's focus on uplifting its citizens and prioritising national development has been the determining factor in its ascent. Today, China is one of the largest traders in the world and retains a major proportion of global manufacturing. It is now investing in modern technologies and fields with significant potential, including artificial intelligence, solar energy, and biotechnology. China currently holds the highest amount of foreign reserves, totalling \$3.2 trillion. Another advantage of this progress has been the strengthening of China's military. While its military expenditures are not as high as those of the United States—standing at \$296 billion compared to the \$916 billion spent by the US—China is poised to match US expenditure in the coming decades. Furthermore, China has amassed significant power on the international stage, enough to challenge the hegemony of the US and the institutions it employs to maintain its global dominance. China achieved this by focusing on the five principles that have been the cornerstone of its policies for the past 70 years: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and cooperation, and peaceful coexistence. These are the principles that China's current leadership upholds and aims to enrich to address emerging global challenges. Pakistan, despite its long association and all-weather friendship and strategic partnership with China, is struggling with a dwindling economy, internal strife, and entangle-

ment in great power rivalry in the region. It currently faces \$130 billion in debt, equivalent to one-third of its GDP, with over \$68 billion owed to China. Despite major investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), economic returns are yet to materialise. To further complicate the situation, Pakistan faces pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to address its debt issues with China. Pakistan's attempts to secure debt rescheduling from China are likely to lead to additional loans, rather than actual relief, which may contribute to the country's mounting debt burden. CPEC is a game-changer and must be treated as such. The development of necessary infrastructure in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) has faced delays. To fully leverage these SEZs, it is essential to create opportunities for both domestic and international investors. Establishing these areas / zones in Pakistan can drive growth and create jobs, benefiting the local economy. Pakistan must also strengthen itself internally to attract more investment. Typically, economic difficulties deter investors, as no international organisation deems it viable to invest in a volatile environment. There have been unfortunate instances of companies relocating from states facing economic challenges. Recently, the Prime Minister's visit to China radiated positive signals, as both sides agreed to upgrade the mega project by building new corridors. They also committed to rehabilitating the Karakoram Highway and further optimising the use of Gwadar Port. The Chinese side pledged to train 1,000 young Pakistani citizens in technology and agriculture to prepare them to spearhead

these domains in the country. Moreover, technology giant Huawei is poised to prepare 200,000 young Pakistanis in IT to fast-track the country's efforts to digitise its economy and promote e-governance. During this visit, both sides announced that third parties would be welcomed to participate in priority areas of industry, agriculture, ICT, science and technology, and mining. Inviting third parties will provide the much-needed impetus to get things done. As Pakistan pursues development through collaboration with China, it needs to ensure that the business environment is conducive for companies to operate smoothly, red tape is eliminated to fast-track operations, and companies are extensively facilitated. Pakistan must prioritise Chinese investments in Pakistan, as they are indeed a cornerstone of bilateral cooperation and a testament to the longstanding partnership between the two countries. On this note, Pakistan should also make efforts to counter Western propaganda against them. It should highlight the role of spoilers to the international community and make plausible efforts to thwart their attempts. In conclusion, in this era of geopolitical instability, Pakistan's close ties with China are a valuable opportunity that must be utilised extensively. Pakistan should make the best of Chinese assistance to not only modernise its industries but also to progress rapidly in various domains. Lastly, the Chinese experience must serve as a guiding example for Pakistan to eradicate poverty and ensure the well-being of its people.

— Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd) is President at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), Lahore.

# Supreme Court verdict reshapes 2024 political arena

Qamar Bashir



In an article titled "PTI: From Hardships to Hope," I wrote, "We can expect a decision that may surprise both the establishment and the government alike and will have a significant impact on the composition of the National and Provincial Assemblies and the governments." After the last Supreme Court hearing, I wrote, "This judgment may either put the country...

THE Supreme Court (SC), in its landmark decision announced today (11.07.2024), surprised the government, the supra executive, and all political parties, including the beneficiaries of leftover reserved seats for women and non-Muslims, as well as the PTI. However, it did not surprise those who had diligently been following the Supreme Court's hearings on the impugned case, petitioned by the Sunni Ittehad Council through their brilliant lawyer, Faisal Siddiqui. On June 4, 2024, during the first hearing of the SC telecast live, I was glued to the TV screen, trying to absorb and educate myself from the highly intense, intricate, and complex proceedings of the SC in the impugned case. I was amazed at how each judge intensely, aggressively, and independently strove to grasp any end of the jumbled thread of legal, political, and social intricacies of the case in an attempt to untangle the complexity. In the evening, I wrote an article titled "Judges vs Judges," published in the national daily on the same day. The concluding paragraph stated, "After diligently and carefully observing both sides, the likely judgment is a split verdict from the full bench, which may restore PTI as a party in the National and Provincial Assemblies and allocate the reserved seats to it." In another article titled "PTI's Fate Hangs on Form vs. Substance," penned on June 24 following the SC hearing, I commented, "During the discussion, an important concept of 'form and substance,' distinguishing between the procedural aspects of a legal matter (form) and its core issues and merits (substance), was discussed. I hoped that substance, not form, would prevail, meaning that fundamental rights and justice would triumph." In an article titled "PTI: From Hardships to Hope," I wrote, "We can expect a decision that may surprise both the establishment and the government alike and will have a significant impact on the composition of the National and Provincial Assemblies and the governments." After the last Supreme Court hearing, I wrote, "This judgment may either put the country back on the constitutional path or..." These layman

observations were reflective of the correct intent of the Supreme Court's full bench. While lawyers, commentators, analysts, and jurists welcomed the decision, the government, which is not even a party to the case, through its law minister reacted angrily to the split verdict, stating that the SC had overstepped its authority by interpreting the constitution in a way that amounted to rewriting it. He added that this decision thwarted the government's attempt to bring constitutional amendments to censure judges who were negligent in their duties and to hold them accountable for their omissions and commissions. Other commentators observed that the judiciary has finally liberated itself from the influence of the executive and has asserted its independence. They argued that the government's proposed constitutional amendments were aimed at reasserting control over the judiciary after their unlawful means to control the judiciary finally failed. The SC, by this judgment, they noted, has thwarted such attempts. The observers are of the view that the SC, which has set the ball rolling after restoring the PTI as a political party, will not stop anytime soon. They believe it will extend to claiming over 80 seats in the national assembly and several seats in the Punjab assembly, which were allegedly stolen from it by altering, fudging, frauding, and manipulating the election results on Form 47 by the returning officers. It would also extend to demanding the liberation of their leader, Imran Khan, and the annulment of the amendment made in the Election Act 2024, which was bulldozed by the parliament with members who were allegedly beneficiaries of PTI's stolen seats. These amendments have given the EC power to appoint tribunals without consulting the Chief Justices of the High Courts. The PTI has already challenged this amendment. They may have many cogent reasons to offer while seeking the annulment of the amendments by the respective high courts. First, they may argue that, on the universal principle of the separation of the executive from the

judiciary, the tribunal cannot be appointed either by the government or the Election Commission without consultation with the judiciary. Second, the SC has declared that the EC harbored bad mala fide intent against the PTI, and the EC was a party against the SIC and PTI in the impugned case. Therefore, the EC cannot appoint Election Tribunals, where the EC and its appointed ROs will be the main defendants. Third, since the elections were conducted based on the Election Amendment Act 2023, any amendments made thereafter should, on all legal, moral, and ethical grounds, apply to the next elections. Furthermore, they may argue that the parliament passed the bill in undue haste, without referring it to the standing committees of both the National Assembly and the Senate for proper consultation and failed to achieve broader support for the bill. They may also argue that the bill was consented to by those members who were illegally made part of the parliament on the reserved seats for women and minorities, which actually belonged to the PTI. Moreover, the bill was passed by an incomplete house; therefore, it may be annulled and referred back to the parliament for reconsideration after both houses are complete and the bill is properly evaluated by the respective committees of both the NA and the Senate. I may close this article with the layman's views offered by my wife after the SC's decision. She said, "When the court makes a decision that appears to have delivered justice, it gives us hope for a brighter future and motivates us to make our country prosper. Conversely, it creates despair, hopelessness, and extinguishes the light even at the end of the tunnel, causing society to lose confidence in the system and its own strength. Let us hope that our judiciary continues to strictly adhere to the constitution and provides the nation with the hope of a better future."

— Former Press Secretary to the President  
Former Press Minister to the  
Embassy of Pakistan to France  
Former MD, SRBC



## Briefs

## Trump survives assassination bid

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why we have to unite this country... We cannot be like this, we cannot condone this," Biden told reporters in an emergency briefing at Rehoboth Beach in Delaware. "The idea that there's political violence, or violence in America like this, is just unheard of. It's just not appropriate. Everybody, everybody must condemn it. Everybody," Biden said. He said he hoped to speak with Trump "shortly." Vice President Kamala Harris said on X: "We are praying for him, his family, and all those who have been injured and impacted by this senseless shooting." Biden's former boss, Barack Obama, echoed his words in a statement, saying there was "absolutely no place for political violence in our democracy."

"Although we don't yet know exactly what happened, we should all be relieved that former President Trump wasn't seriously hurt, and use this moment to recommit ourselves to civility and respect in our politics," the Democrat said on X. Former president George W. Bush condemned the "cowardly" attack. "Laura and I are grateful that President Trump is safe following the cowardly attack on his life. And we commend the men and women of the Secret Service for their speedy response," the Republican said in a statement. From the Senate, top Democrat Chuck Schumer said he was "horrified by what happened at the Trump rally in Pennsylvania and relieved that former President Trump is safe. Political violence has no place in our country." His Republican counterpart Mitch McConnell also posted: "Tonight, all Americans are grateful that President Trump appears to be fine after a despicable attack on a peaceful rally. Violence has no place in our politics." "As one whose family has been the victim of political violence, I know firsthand that political violence of any kind has no place in our society," former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose husband was attacked in a home invasion in 2022, wrote, also on X.

## K-P govt demands resignation..

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Dr Saif accused the commissioner of personal vendetta against PTI and facilitating unconstitutional actions by a conspiratorial group. He demanded immediate resignations from the commissioner and the members, accusing them of committing unconstitutional acts. He further criticised the ECP for disregarding court orders and constitutional requirements repeatedly. He alleged that the commission deprived PTI of its electoral symbol, forcing the party to contest without it, leading to significant electoral malpractice before, during, and after the elections. Despite these challenges, Dr Saif noted that the people still supported PTI, leading to their success in the elections. He criticised the ECP for ignoring all unconstitutional actions while acknowledging public's support for PTI.

## JI protests against...

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electricity and the unfair slab systems. Government is increasing bills on the direction of the IMF. He asserted the elite and cruel government was increasing taxes and petroleum prices. The movement 'Haq to Awaam ko', which gave rights to the public, was against anti-people measures of the incumbent government, Hafiz Naem said. They were warned to take to streets for their rights and move to courts. JI emir invited the public for a peaceful protest and sit-in on July 26. Hafiz Naemur Rehman considered the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had no ethical credibility and stood after the Supreme Court verdict. He also demanded the resignation of the chief election commissioner, referring to the apex court verdict allowing PTI reserved seats.

## PCB keen on hosting all CT matches in Pakistan

The PCB will host the matches of Champions Trophy across three venues in the country

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) stands firm on its stance of hosting all of Champions Trophy 2025 matches in the country despite rumours of a neutral venue or plan B, sources told Geo News on Sunday. Pakistan is set to host the 2025 Champions Trophy and recently, the rumours of a "plan B" and "neutral venue" started to emerge in the news, wherein it was reported that the Indian cricket team will not travel to Pakistan and play their matches on a neutral venue. However, the PCB strongly believes that since the event is of Pakistan, it should be completely staged in Pakistan. The International Cricket Council's (ICC) annual meeting is scheduled in Colombo from July 19 to 22 and the PCB delegation will go there with a strong stance of hosting all the matches in the country. Three venues – Karachi, Rawalpindi



di and Lahore – will host the matches of eight matches and according to PCB's proposed schedule to ICC, all of India's matches will take place in Lahore. The PCB also allocated Rs12.80 billion for upgradation of three stadiums. Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium, Karachi's National Bank Cricket Arena and Rawalpindi International Cricket Stadium will be elevated ahead of the marquee event. Except India, all eight teams that will participate in the Champions Trophy have already played in Pakistan and the PCB believes that India does not have a strong reason not to come here. If India decides not to travel for the Champions Trophy, then Pakistan will not go to India for the 2026 T20 World Cup which the Blues will co-host with Sri Lanka. The proposed dates for the Champions Trophy are from 19th February to 9th March. This event will mark the return of the ICC Champions Trophy after an eight-year hiatus, with its last occurrence in 2017, when Pakistan emerged victorious by defeating India in the final.

## Yamal confident of beating England in Euro final

La Roja are aiming for their first European Championship since 2012

BERLIN: Lamine Yamal explained how Spain can beat England in the European Championship (Euro) 2024 final which is set to be played at the Olympiastadion Berlin on Sunday. Yamal has been on fire in Euro 2024 as he is the top assister of the tournament and also scored an important goal against France in the semi-final. The 17-year-old will once again be the centre of attention as England's head coach Gareth Southgate will have a plan to contain and limit the threat he poses. "A dream final, especially with England in front. Everyone wants to play matches like that. Now what we want is for the cup to end in Spain," Yamal said while talking to MARCA.

The left-footed star then added that the key to beating Spain is just to play the way they have been playing throughout the tournament. "Playing the way we are doing, like against Germany or France. Being ourselves, having the ball and controlling the game at all times. I think we are the best at that and nobody can stop us if we do that," Yamal said when asked how Spain could win on Sunday night. "It is clear that as a team there is no one like Spain, playing the ball, going for the pressure. We are doing very well. In the end, putting that intensity in is key. Without it you cannot win a Euro final." Earlier, it was reported that Yamal's playing time could

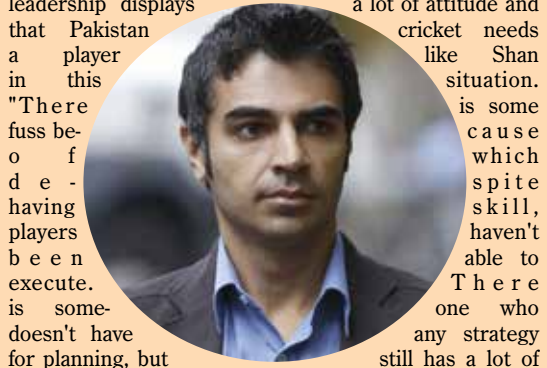
be limited in the final against England. According to German laws, a minor (below the age of 18) cannot work after 8pm in the country. With most Euro 2024 matches starting at 9pm local time, Yamal, being a sportsman, was given special dispensation to continue playing till 11. If the match entered into extra time, Spain's head coach Luis de la Fuente would be forced to take Yamal off at 90 minutes as after that, Lo Roja would be at a constant risk of breaking a German law. Should Yamal continue to play after 90 minutes, Spain could reportedly be hit with a fine of up to €30,000 (£25,390) for the infraction but will not face any sporting sanctions. – Agencies

## Pakistan contingent to feature in Olympic Games

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will be participating in the upcoming XXXIII Summer Olympic Games in Paris, France with a contingent of seven athletes competing in Athletics, Shooting, and Swimming. The composition of the Pakistan team is as follows- Athletics: Arshad Nadeem - Athlete, Javelin Throw (Qualified); Ms. Faiga Riaz - Athlete, 100m (Universality Place) – approved by World Athletics; Salman Iqbal Butt – Athlete Support Personnel and Dr. Ali Sher Bajwa – Athlete Support Personnel, said a press release. Swimming: Muhammad Ahmed Durrani - Athlete, 200m Freestyle (Universality Place) – approved by World Aquatics; Jehanara Nabi - Athlete, 200m Freestyle (Universality Place) – approved by World Aquatics and Lt Col (R) Ahmed Ali Khan - Athlete Support Personnel. Shooting: Ghulam Mustafa Bashir - Athlete (25m Rapid Fire Pistol) – Qualified; Gulam Joseph - Athlete (10m Air Pistol, 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team) – Qualified; Ms. Kishmala Talat - Athlete (10m Air Pistol, 25m Pistol, 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team) – Qualified; Col Junaid Ali - Athlete Support Personnel; Gennady Solodovnikov, Athlete Support Personnel. – DNA

## Salman Butt names captain to replace Babar Azam

ISLAMABAD: Former opener Salman Butt has named Shan Masood to be Pakistan's Test captain, lost his first Test series as captain where Pakistan suffered a clean sweep in Australia in a three-match Test series. Babar Azam is Pakistan's current ODI and T20I captain, but his position is under severe threat after the team's early exit from the T20 World Cup 2024. Pakistan failed to qualify for the Super 8 stage and suffered a shocking exit from the group stage for the first time in history. While speaking on his YouTube channel, Butt endorsed Shan as Pakistan's captain for all three formats. Butt asserted that the current leadership displays a lot of attitude and that Pakistan cricket needs a player like Shan in this situation. "There is some cause which spite skill, haven't able to execute. There is some strategy for planning, but still has a lot of attitude. To silence that attitude, I would definitely make Shan Masood the captain," Butt opined. "I would do that for some time at least. Something like that needs to be done for some time. Pakistan have constantly backed certain players who have their own inner circles. So, you need someone who stands higher than all these groups and friendships," he added. In addition to being the captain of Pakistan's Test team, Shan is currently leading Yorkshire in the County Championship in England. He also leads the Karachi Kings in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Babar had already stepped down from Pakistan's captaincy in all formats following the team's poor performance in the ODI World Cup last year. Shaheen Afridi was appointed as Pakistan's T20I captain for a brief period. However, the left-arm pacer was removed from the role after just one T20I series, which the Men in Green lost in New Zealand. But, Mohsin Naqvi joined the PCB as the chairman and reinstated Babar Azam as the captain of the white-ball teams. – DNA



## Alcaraz crushes Djokovic to retain Wimbledon title

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Carlos Alcaraz powered to victory over an out-of-form Novak Djokovic in a bewildering final to retain his men's singles title at Wimbledon. A repeat of last year's showpiece, it failed to live up to the five-set thriller of 12 months ago as Djokovic appeared mostly helpless against the dominant Spaniard. After squandering three championship points when trying to serve out the victory, Alcaraz held his arms aloft after battling through the third-set tie-break for a 6-2 6-2 7-6 (7-4) win.

"Honestly, it is a dream for me winning this trophy," said Alcaraz. "I did an interview when I was 11 and I said my dream is to win Wimbledon." Gracious in defeat, Djokovic shared a smile and warm embrace with Alcaraz at the net after the comprehensive defeat. For a second straight year, Djokovic was attempting to equal Roger Federer's record of eight Wimbledon men's titles. The 24-time major winner was also trying to move ahead of Margaret Court to take sole ownership of the all-time record for the most Grand Slam singles titles. As tradition now dictates, Alcaraz climbed up to the



players' box and was leapt upon by his team and family, celebrating a 14th consecutive match win at Wimbledon. The result continues the four-time major

winner's 100% record in Grand Slam finals, while he becomes the youngest man to win at Wimbledon and the French Open in the same year.

## Scaloni calls for a violence-free Copa America final

WASHINGTON : Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni hopes Sunday's Copa America final will be free from violence after clashes between players and fans marred the last-four match between Colombia and Uruguay. After Colombia sealed a 1-0 victory in Charlotte, North Carolina, Uruguay players climbed into the stands, exchanging blows with opposition fans. Defending champions Argentina will face Colombia at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens on Sunday and Scaloni said it should be a party. "I hope the fans have a party, I want it with all my heart. Apart from the joy of winning the title, I think it

would be a joy for everyone if it ends well," Scaloni told a press conference on Saturday. Scaloni voiced his support for the Uruguayan players involved in the incident after the Uruguayan Football Association said their family members had been assaulted by Colombian fans in the stands. "We ask the players to set an example, but when something like this happens, no one acts differently. I hope it doesn't happen again. I don't know if it's anybody's fault, but to see your family in a riot or nearby must be desperate." Argentina forward Angel Di Maria is set to retire from internationals after the final, but Scaloni

said it was not guaranteed that he would play. "Even though we know it will be his last game, we will always decide first what is best for the team. If he has to play it's because he has to play, if we decide not to play him it's because we think differently," he said. "We hope that everything goes well and that Angel can retire in the best possible way," he added. Argentina, who beat Canada 2-0 in the last four, will be looking to extend their winning streak in finals after they won the 2021 Copa America in Brazil, the Intercontinental final against European champions Italy in 2022 and the World Cup in Qatar against France. "It is a final and every final has its nuances. We will try to play it and win it. Every team that goes to a final knows the flavour of it and what's at stake," Scaloni said. – Agencies

## India thump Zimbabwe in final T20I by 42 runs

The hosts managed 125 after India posted 167/6 in their 20 overs

SPORTS DESK

HARARE: India thumped Zimbabwe by 42 runs to complete a 4-1 win in the T20I series played at the Harare Sports Club. The hosts managed after India posted 167/6 in their 20 overs after being asked to bat first. Earlier, a fine half-century by Sanju Samson and a quickfire cameo by Shivam Dube propelled India to a modest total. India began with a flourish, thanks to two big sixes from opener Yashasvi Jaiswal off a no-ball and the first legal delivery of the opening over by Sikandar Raza, the Zimbabwe captain. However, Raza had the last laugh as he clean bowled Jaiswal for 12 runs off five balls. India was 13/1 in 0.4 overs. Abhishek Sharma joined the captain, Shubman Gill, at the crease. The pair eased some pressure by taking down Faraz Akram with two fours and a six in the third over. But in the next over, pacer Blessing Muzarabani removed Abhishek for 14 runs off 11 balls, which included a four and a six. Wicketkeeper Clive Mandandje took a fine catch. India was 38/2 in 3.5 overs. In the very next over, India found themselves in big trouble as skipper Gill lost his wicket to Richard Ngarva for 13 runs off 14 balls, with Raza taking a catch at

mid-on. India was 40/3 in five overs. Samson and Parag continued their fine chemistry displayed in the league, this time in Indian colours. They took India to the halfway point of the innings without much

attacking, besides a six each from both. Mavuta got the scalp of Parag for 22 runs off 24 balls, including a six, after the batter mistimed a slog which landed in the hands of Ngarva at long-off. The 65-run partner-



ship was over. India was 105/4 in 14.2 overs. Samson reached his second T20I half-century in 39 balls, with four sixes. Samson's fine innings came to an end with Muzarabani getting the crucial wicket and Tadiwanashe Marumani taking a fine catch. The wicketkeeper-batter was dismissed for 58 runs off 45 balls, with a four and four sixes. India was 135/5 in 17.3 overs. In the 19th over, Dube relieved some pressure by smashing Ngarva for two fours and a six. India scored a total of 16 runs from the over and crossed the 150-run mark. Muzarabani was the pick of the bowlers for Zimbabwe. Ngarva, Raza, and Mavuta also took a wicket each. In reply, Zimbabwe lost Wessly Madhevere in the first over while Brian Bennett departed in the third over. Tadiwanashe Marumani and Dion Myers tried to put pressure back on India, however, Washington Sundar ended the 44-run stand by removing Marumani. He made 24-ball 27. Meanwhile, Myers departed in the 13th over as he tried to accelerate. He made 32-ball 34. Sikandar Raza (8) didn't do much damage as he was run out. Faisal Akram (27) played some blistering shots at the backend but the runs were too many to pull off. Mukesh Kumar was India's best bowler with 4-22 while Dube picked two wickets.

## Imran tells judge, You're answerable to Allah...

FROM PAGE 01

"Bushra Bibi is only imprisoned to cause me distress." Bushra Bibi was also rearrested yesterday in the new NAB reference regarding the sale of state gifts (Toshakkhana) case when she was being released from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. He accused higher authorities of targeting his wife due to his decisions, saying, "My wife is being targeted by the king because I removed him from the ISI position, and my wife did not support him." "Jail me, but leave my wife alone. Judge, you are answerable to Allah, not the ISI. Judge Bashir said a decision was made at gunpoint," Imran pleaded. "A former prime minister being told in the middle of the night that he has to appear for a brand new case in the morning," Imran remarked wryly. He criticised the accountability watchdog, alleging that it operates like robots, doing whatever they are paid to do. He added, "In the previous reference, the jewellery set, which was valued at Rs18 million, was claimed to be worth Rs3.25 billion." "I am only speaking about my wife. Re-arresting her [Bushra Bibi] was a grave mistake," Imran said. Throughout the hearing, Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi sat together. According to a short order by Judge Afzal Majoka yesterday, Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi were to be immediately released unless they were wanted in other cases.

## PTI's MNA 'abducted' in Lahore...

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Jhang, was abducted while he was at his house at Sarwar Road in Punjab's capital, PTI Lahore Secretary General Hafiz Zeeshan claimed. "Unknown men arrived [at this house] in two vehicles and abducted him last night," the PTI leader said, claiming that after Supreme Court's order on the reserved seats, the party members are "unsafe". The apex court has ruled that the PTI is eligible for reserved seats, meaning that once the party gets those seats, it will become the largest party in the National Assembly. In response, SSP Cantt Awaiz Shafiq told Geo News that neither had the police arrested the PTI MNA nor did the law enforcers receive any complaint about his alleged abduction. Zeeshan, when inquired as to why no complaint had been filed so far, told Geo News that the party was drafting the complaint and would submit it to the police station tomorrow (Monday).

## Security of Muharram processions increased

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majalis will hold in the provincial capital, Punjab Police Spokesman said. More than 6000 officers and officials will perform security duties of the seventh Muharram in Lahore. Traffic Police, CTD, Special Branch and volunteers are also providing assistance in the security of the gatherings and processions, said Punjab Police spokesman. IG Punjab instructed RPOs and DPOs to monitor Muharram security arrangements themselves. IG Punjab said that police should be on high alert and there should be no compromise on the security of congregations, processions and mourners. Dr Usman Anwar instructed that control rooms and CCTV cameras should be used to monitor the security arrangements and processions from moment to moment.

## PM orders to reactivate Neelum-Jhelum...

FROM PAGE 01

completion of the report and strict action against the culprits. The meeting included key ministers and officials, who discussed the technical and administrative lapses that led to the project's failure.



## Briefs

## 8 female bodies recovered from Nairobi dump

NAIROBI: A total of eight bodies, all of them female, have been recovered so far from a dumpsite in a Nairobi slum, Kenya's acting police chief said on Sunday. "They were severely dismembered in different states of decomposition and left in sacks," Douglas Kanja told a press conference, adding that investigations into the gruesome find are ongoing. Kanja said the first six corpses were found on Friday and body parts of another two women were found on Saturday. "I would like to assure the public that we are committed to conducting transparent, thorough and swift investigations," he added. Kanja also called for public cooperation in the investigation "so that we bring the perpetrators of these heinous acts to book." Kanja took up his post only this week after the resignation of national police chief Japhet Koome in the wake of public fury over the deaths of dozens of protesters during anti-government demonstrations last month.—APP

## Somalia prison breakout attempt leaves several dead

Eight people were killed in Somalia's capital Mogadishu after gunfire broke out between security forces and some prisoners who had acquired weapons and were trying to escape, state media and the prisons service said. The firefight broke out in the capital's main prison, located in the city's south near the port. During the operation five prisoners and three soldiers were killed while 21 people, majority of them inmates, were injured, Abdiqani Mohamed Qalaf, spokesperson for the prison service said on Facebook. He blamed "a violent group" among the prisoners for the attack. No prisoners had escaped and an investigation into how the attack occurred will be conducted, he added. "Explosion inside the cell" "Somalia's prison forces concluded an operation in which prisoners fought inside the cell. Prisoners who tried to fight were shot dead," Somalia National TV said in a post on their Facebook account.

It said the inmates who died were members of the terrorist group Al Shabab who had been sentenced to death.

Two security personnel at the prison, who asked not to be named for fear of retribution, told Reuters grenades and guns had been smuggled into the cell and the inmates had used them to start the firefight. "We heard gunfire and... explosion inside the cell. The gunfire stopped after like 15 minutes. Government forces cordoned (off) the whole area," said Abdullahi Aden, a local resident who lives near the prison.—APP

## Turkish forces 'neutralize' 4 PKK terrorists

DNA

ANKARA : Turkish security forces "neutralized" four terrorists in northern Iraq and Syria, the National Defense Ministry said on Sunday. The Turkish Armed Forces have neutralized two PKK terrorists in the Gara region of northern Iraq and also two PKK/YPG terrorists in the Euphrates Shield region of northern Syria, the ministry said. Turkish authorities use "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. In its nearly 40-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK - listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the US, and EU - has been responsible for the deaths of over 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants.

## British MP Ayoub Khan backs Palestinian cause

Prominent Pakistani business leader Zafar Bakhtawari holds meeting with the Parliamentarian in London

DNA

LONDON: Newly elected Pro-Palestine independent MP from Perry Barr, Birmingham, constituency, Ayoub Khan has reiterated his unwavering commitment to championing the Palestinian cause, dedicating his victory to the resilient people of Gaza. Khan lambasted the global community's hypocritical stance on the issue, vowing to persistently raise awareness in the British Parliament. He said this during an exclusive session in London with prominent Pakistani business leader, former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce

## UN Chief condemns Israeli airstrike on Gaza

NEW YORK : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned an Israeli airstrike on the Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip, which was designated a "humanitarian zone" for displaced Palestinians. "This (attack) underscores that nowhere is safe in Gaza," according to a statement that said Guterres is "shocked and saddened" by the strike that killed 90 victims in a densely populated humanitarian area where displaced persons are located. "The UN Secretary-General condemns the killing of civilians, including children and women," it noted. Referring to Israel's claim of targeting "two Hamas members," the statement said: "The Secretary-General underlines that international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack, must be upheld at all times." It reiterated Guterres's demand for an immediate cease-fire and the release of hostages in Gaza, stating that "the war must end." At least 300 were also injured in the attack, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. Israel, flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza since an Oct. 7 attack by the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas.—APP

and Industry and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari. The MP also drew parallels with the occupied Kashmir region, highlighting the similarities in the struggles faced by both populations. He acknowledged the critical role of social media in amplifying the Palestinian narrative, leveraging graphics to convey the severity of the situation. In contrast, Khan noted the technological limitations hindering the Kashmiri people's ability to share their stories, resulting in relatively less global attention. Ayoub Khan reassured the Kashmiri community that they have a strong advocate in the British Parliament,

pledging to vocally support their cause and echo their concerns. He also expressed his desire to strengthen UK-Pakistan relations, bridging the gap between the two nations through enhanced business connectivity and cultural exchange. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General of the United Business Group, briefed Khan on Pakistan's investment opportunities and the business community's role in youth development through industry-academia linkages. Bakhtawari extended an invitation to Khan to visit Pakistan and explore its tourism potential, which he accepted.

## Belarus's Lukashenko says border tension gone, extra troops return

President Lukashenko also said that Belarusian intelligence had determined that Ukraine had withdrawn troops from sensitive areas

WEB DESK

MINSK : Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, a close ally of Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin, said that tensions had subsided at his country's border with Ukraine and extra troops deployed there were being sent back to their bases. Belarus's defense ministry said late last month that it was reinforcing its border after a security incident and in response to a Ukrainian troop buildup. They said a division of multiple launch rocket systems had been deployed to test their combat readiness. Lukashenko, quoted by the official BelTA news agency during a tour of a border region, said that Belarusian intelligence had determined that

Ukraine had withdrawn troops from sensitive areas. "That means that those (Ukrainian) troops which had been brought in as reinforcements are now gone," BelTA quoted him as saying. "...There are now no difficulties with the Ukrainians and I hope there will be none." BelTA said he told a meeting of regional officials that the additional Belarusian troops dispatched to the area should return to their assigned bases. "Well, friends, we have to pull back our troops from the border," he was quoted as saying. "So that it is understood that we have no intention of fighting or concentrating our armed forces here, apart from special operations forces." A spokesperson for Ukraine's border guards, in a statement posted online, dismissed the notion

of an extra deployment. "From the outset the Belarusians created this threat for themselves and then lifted the very same threat," it said. Russia had said the Belarusian statements and deployment were "cause for concern." Lukashenko allowed Russia to use Belarusian territory to launch the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, but has made plain he has no intention of committing troops to the conflict. The Belarusian president, in power since 1994, relied on Putin's assurances of support in quelling unprecedented mass protests in 2020 by demonstrators alleging he rigged his re-election to a sixth term. The two men meet regularly and Russia has in the past year has deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

## Solidarity protests with Palestine held in Dublin

DUBLIN: Health care workers organized a protest Saturday in support of Palestine in front of the US Embassy in the Irish capital of Dublin. Protesters from the Irish Healthcare Workers for Palestine Association held banners with slogans such as "Break the chains of Zionism", "End the genocide" and "Palestinian babies are not targets." Demonstrators read the names of health care workers killed in the Gaza Strip and displayed posters of US President Joe Biden to highlight Washington's partnership with Israeli actions in Gaza. "Since Oct. 7, we wanted to remember our health care colleagues who have been killed by Israeli occupation forces and unlawfully detained, to honor their courage and compassion in difficult conditions, and to stand in solidarity with those who are detained," Caroline Jagoe told Anadolu. Jagoe said Gaza has been subjected to unprecedented attacks by Israeli armed forces for more than nine months.—APP

## Nigerian school building collapse death toll rises

LAGOS: The death toll from the collapse of a Nigerian school building in the north-central Plateau State has risen to 22, an official and hospital rescue workers said on Saturday. The two-story building of classrooms and staff offices in the city of Jos collapsed on Friday while students were taking exams, killing at least 12 students and teachers. But two rescue workers from the State Emergency Agency told Anadolu Agency on Saturday that a total of 22 dead bodies - 18 students and four teachers - were pulled out of the rubble at the conclusion of search and rescue operations late Friday. Musa Ashoms, the commissioner for information and communication, also confirmed the death toll rose to 22, with the injured admitted to hospitals. "Current situation, 154 people have been rescued from the debris. Sadly, 22 individuals have been confirmed deceased," he said in a statement late Friday. He said the injured students and staff are receiving medical treatment at four hospitals in the city. Ashoms confirmed a total of 132 hospitalized out of 154 victims of the collapse. The government has yet to give a breakdown of the students and teachers dead as well as the injured. Joseph Ariyo, a relative of one of the deceased students, said the family has yet to be given the victim's body. "The government has taken over the situation and we're only waiting for their directive," he told Anadolu, declining further comment. Daramola Ekundayo, the school principal, said the school building caved in at about 11:30 a.m. (1130GMT) on Friday with about 200 students taking their exams supervised by a few teachers. He did not give the number of teachers who were within the building when the incident occurred.—APP

## Kim sacks 'irresponsible' officials over new town project

SEOUL : North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has sacked or demoted some senior officials for their "irresponsible" handling of his flagship project to build a new town in the country's north, state media KCNA said on Sunday. Kim announced the decision while visiting Samjiyon, where North Korea has been building what it called a "socialist utopia" and "a model of highly-civilised mountain city" with new apartments, hotels, a ski resort and commercial, cultural and medical facilities. While praising builders for their achievements so far, Kim said the irresponsibility of senior officials had caused a series of serious deviations including poor construction work and financial losses. He singled out Ri Sun Chol, minister of state construction control who was appointed in September, as a "good-for-nothing person" who has never even been to the site since December, suspending him and calling for a formal investigation. Kim also suspended all members of a construction inspection committee for the project, demoted a ruling Worker's Party official responsible for the matter, and vowed to re-examine vice premier and others over their neglect of duty.—DNA

## Singapore births hit 20-year low in 2023

ANKARA : The number of babies born in Singapore in 2023 has plummeted to its lowest level in 20 years, entrenching the country's "great baby drought." A total of 33,541 babies were born in 2023, a 5.8% decline from 35,605 babies born in 2022, Singapore-based The Straits Times reported on Sunday, citing a report on Registration of Births and Deaths 2023 published by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority. The 2023 tally is 13.3% lower than the 38,672 babies born in 2021. In February, it was announced that the resident total fertility rate (TFR) fell below 1 for the first time in Singapore's history, though the actual number of babies born in 2023 was not stated. The TFR, which refers to the average number of babies a woman will have during her reproductive years, was 0.97 in 2023, making Singapore one of the lowest in the world. While the number of births has been falling, the number of deaths has been steadily climbing over the past decade. A total of 26,888 people died in 2023, just 0.01% fewer than the 26,891 deaths in 2022. The 2023 figure was 10.7% higher than the 24,292 deaths recorded in 2021.—Agencies

## French PM aims to rebuild political force

PARIS: France's prime minister on was elected leader of his party's National Assembly lawmakers as politicians from all sides jockeyed for position to form the next government. Gabriel Attal was the only candidate in the vote by the Renaissance party parliamentary group, which he plans to use as the base from which to rebuild the political force that got roundly beaten in a snap election called by President Emmanuel Macron. Of the 98 Renaissance deputies registered to vote, 84 backed Attal, who will start in his role next week. As Attal and other ministers eye a future outside government, deep cracks have appeared between the 35-year-old premier and his former mentor Macron. Macron did not get any mention in Attal's message to Renaissance deputies outlining his leadership bid, with observers saying that the prime minister blames the president for calling the vote, which he said took the party to the brink of "extinction." Sunday's election runoff left the National Assembly without an overall majority, but a broad alliance - called New Popular Front of Socialists, Communists, Greens and the hard-left France Unbowed won the most seats, with 193 in the 577-strong lower chamber.—APP

## Dubai Crown Prince Named UAE Defence Minister

The UAE, one of the world's largest oil producers and an ally of the United States, Russia and China, has grown to be a major power in the Middle East

RIYADH : Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum on Sunday announced he appointed his son, the emirate's crown prince, as defence minister of the United Arab Emirates in a cabinet reshuffle. "Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has joined the government of the UAE as Deputy Prime Minister and has been appointed Minister of Defence," Sheikh Mohammed, who is the UAE's prime minister, wrote on X. Sheikh Hamdan, 41, is the second son of Sheikh Mohammed and has held the title of crown prince of Dubai since 2008. The royal graduated in 2001 from Britain's elite Sandhurst military college and became chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, a body responsible for strategic development plans in the emirate, in 2006. His father, Sheikh Mohammed, has been defence minister since the founding of the UAE in 1971, when he was just 22-years-old. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the foreign minister, was also appointed as a deputy prime minister in the cabinet shuffle. The minor cabinet reshuffle also saw a number of other ministers changed, as well as the merging of ministries. The UAE, one of the world's largest oil producers and an ally of the United States, Russia and China, has grown to be a major power in the Middle East.—DNA



DOHA: Ambassador Muhemmed Aejaz meet with Mansour Ajraan Al-Boeinin, General Director of Doha Municipality & discussed issues of Pakistan engineers. He also highlighted the PISQ expansion project which aims to better serve the community's needs.—DNA

## S. Korea vows to stop N. Korean defector repatriation

President Yoon says he will spare no 'diplomatic effort' to prevent defectors' forced repatriation

## Kim's Sister hints resuming trash balloons to South

SEOUL: The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed Sunday to respond to what she called a fresh South Korean civilian leafletting campaign, signaling North Korea would soon resume flying trash-carrying balloons across the border. Since late May, North Korea has floated numerous balloons carrying waste paper, scraps of cloth, cigarette butts and even manure toward South Korea on a series of late-night launch events, saying they were a tit-for-tat action against South Korean activists scattering political leaflets via their own balloons. No hazardous materials have been found. South Korea responded by suspending a 2018 tension-reduction deal with North Korea and resumed live-fire drills at border areas. In a statement carried by state media, Kim Yo Jong said that "dirty leaflets and things of (the South Korean) scum" were found again in border and other areas in North Korea on Sunday morning. "Despite the repeated warnings of (North Korea), the (South Korean) scum are not stopping this crude and dirty play," she said. "We have fully introduced our countermeasure in such situation. The (South Korean) clans will be tired from suffering a bitter embarrassment and must be ready for paying a very high price for their dirty play," Kim Yo Jong said. North Korea last sent rubbish-carrying balloons toward South Korea in late July. It wasn't immediately known if, and from which activists' group in South Korea, balloons were sent to North Korea recently. For years, groups led by North Korean defectors have floated huge balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang leaflets, USB sticks containing K-pop songs and South Korean drama, and U.S. dollar bills toward North Korea. Experts say North Korea views such balloons campaigns as a grave provocation that can threaten its leadership because it bans official access to foreign news for most of its 26 million people. On June 9, South Korea redeployed gigantic loudspeakers along the border for the first time in six years, and resumed anti-North Korean propaganda broadcasts.—APP

South Korea by its official name. As part of that effort, Yoon said resettlement funds provided to the defectors, which have been at the same level since 2005, will be substantially increased. He also said the central and regional governments and state-run institutions will hire more defectors. Tax credits, among other incentives, will be offered to companies that employ defectors, he added. During a Cabinet meeting on Jan. 16, Yoon instructed the unification ministry to designate a day for North Korean defectors, insisting that those defectors are South Korean citizens under the Constitution. The ministry then chose July 14 as the official day for the defectors because the law on protecting them and supporting their settlement in the South went into effect on July 14, 1997.—APP



## Briefs

### Imran to be interrogated in 3 May 9 cases

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan would be interrogated in three cases related to May 9 vandalism. It has been decided that the former prime minister would be probed for provoking the people in Jinnah House, Askari Tower and Shadman Police Station attack case. A 13-member police team headed by DSP Legal will interrogate the PTI founder in all three cases. The police officials said that Imran Khan is wanted in three cases related to May 9 and strong evidence is available against him for inciting the people. An investigation team of Lahore Police is already there in Rawalpindi for executing the orders of arresting the PTI founder. Earlier, a NAB court re-arrested Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in NAB custody for eight days in a fresh Toshakhana case. The court issued order within 24 hours after arrest of the couple on Saturday afternoon from Adiala jail after their release in irregular marriage case.

### Four dead, 10 injured in Chitral accident

CHITRAL: In a tragic incident, four died, while ten others, including four women, were injured after a vehicle plunged into a ravine in the Yarkhun Valley of Chitral. As per details, the police officials stated that the injured have been shifted to the nearby hospital. Earlier, at least 13 people, mostly women and children, were killed and another four injured after a passenger jeep plunged into the icy Neelum River in the upper belt of Neelum Valley. The accident occurred at around 11am when a jeep skidded off the highway and plunged into Neelum River. The deceased included four women and three children. As soon as the incident was reported, the rescue officials immediately reached the site of the accident and started rescue operation. The rescue teams shifted the bodies to a morgue for medico-legal procedures and the injured to a nearby hospital for medical assistance. In a similar incident that too happened at Neelum Valley, at least six people, including women and children, had been killed in a road accident in the Taobat area of Neelum Valley district. A jeep carrying 23 people from Kail to Taobat plunged into the river when the driver lost control over the vehicle, said police. As a result, all the passengers inside drowned in the river. The bodies were retrieved later by local rescuers, the official added. - Agencies

### Met Office forecast heatwave

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Met Office in its weather update on Sunday forecast new heatwave in city on Tuesday and Wednesday (Muharram 9 and 10). The weather will most probably remain hot and humid on July 16 and 17. Owing to the low-pressure sea breeze will be suspended and temperature could soar as high as to 39 Celsius, according to the Met Office. "Temperature in Thatta and Sujawal districts could reach to 41 degree Celsius," according to weather report. The weather will remain hot and humid in other districts of Sindh. Sindh's eastern districts of Tharparkar, Mirpur Khas and Sanghar likely to be lashed by rainfall with thunderstorm. Karachi could have drizzling on July 16, the Met Office said in its weather update for the city. The weather department has predicted entry of monsoon currents in the city from July 18 and likely heavy rainfall on July 19 and 20.

# Experts recommend 'strategic patience' on Pak-India relations

The panellists also underscored that the BJP Ministers' statements about Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan should not be taken lightly; nor the possibilities of a false flag operation orchestrated by the Indian side be ruled out

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: To analyse the possible future policy approach of India under the third term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and consider policy options for Pakistan, the India Study Centre (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), organised a roundtable titled "Modi 3.0 - What to Expect Regarding Pakistan-India Relations?" The Roundtable was attended by senior diplomats, academics, heads of think-tanks, journalists, and area specialists. The panellists had the consensus view that at the moment, given the developments in post-election India and the dynamics of BJP-led NDA government, no major breakthrough was expected as far as relations between India and Pakistan were concerned. They noted that the BJP leadership's sharply anti-Pakistan rhetoric during the Lok Sabha election campaign, relentless smear against Pakistan by Indian Ministers internationally, and continuation of the same security and foreign policy team, clearly indicated that there was no likelihood of a change in New Delhi's general outlook towards Pakistan or of positive movement in India-Pakistan relations. The panellists cautioned that statements from Pakistan indicating its willingness to talk to India on all issues were at times misinterpreted by New Delhi as a sign of weakness. They stressed that while Pa-



kistan should remain open to the possibility of constructive engagement, the onus remained on India to create an enabling environment for result-oriented dialogue. They recommended 'strategic patience' while discussing policy options for Pakistan - underlining that Pakistan should pursue good-neighbourly relations on the basis of mutual respect, sovereign equality, and peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues including the Jammu and Kashmir

dispute. The participants underscored the importance of upholding Pakistan's principled position on Jammu and Kashmir and proactively pursuing it at all appropriate international fora. The panellists also underscored that the BJP Ministers' statements about Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan should not be taken lightly; nor the possibilities of a false flag operation orchestrated by the Indian side be ruled out. Many participants also stressed the

importance of shedding the misplaced notion among some circles that Pakistan's economic security somehow depended on re-opening bilateral trade with India. The panellists further recommended that, as part of the efforts to advance its overall national development goals, Pakistan must continue to work for a peaceful external environment, find a sustainable solution to the challenges in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, optimise the potential of Pakistan-Iran relations, and deepen its partnership with the Central Asian countries focused on economic integration and connectivity. The panellists also recommended that Pakistan should further strengthen its relations with major powers - including deepening of understanding and mutually beneficial relationship with the U.S.; pursuing closer collaboration with Russia on energy as well as regional security and connectivity; and fortifying all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with China. Pakistan should also cultivate productive partnerships with Middle Eastern nations, ASEAN, EU, and Africa, they stressed. The participants were of the view that Pakistan's upcoming term as the elected member of United Nations Security Council (2025-26) offered a valuable opportunity to further advance Pakistan's foreign policy goals and its contribution to international peace and security.

## Independent MNAs begin declaring party affiliation with PTI

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Following the Supreme Court's directive, the issue of party affiliation for 41 independent candidates in the National Assembly is being addressed, with MNAs starting to declare their party affiliation with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had instructed all independent candidates to submit their affidavits to the party office immediately. Despite these orders, only 20 MNAs have complied so far, while 21 MNAs have yet to submit their certificates. Among those who have submitted their party affiliation certificates are MNAs Azeemuddin, Chaudhry Usman, Sajid Khan, Sheharyar Afridi, Jamshed Dasti, Osama Hamza, Rana Bilal Ijaz, Muhammad Ahmad Chatta, Mian Azhar (father of Hamad Azhar), and Syed Ali Raza Geelani. However, several MNAs from South Punjab, including Mian Shabbir Ali Qureshi, Fayyaz Hussain, Khawaja Shiraz, Mian Javed Iqbal, Ayesha Nazir, and Mian Ghos Muhammad, have not yet submitted their certificates to the party.

## Pakistan-Iraq work together to facilitate pilgrims' travel



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Iraqi ambassador to Pakistan, Hamid Abbas Lafta on Sunday met with Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Minister of Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain and discussed ways to improve the travel experience for Pakistani pilgrims visiting Iraq. The meeting was focused on making it easier and more affordable for Pakistani Muslims to travel to Iraq for religious pilgrimages. The discussion highlighted the possibility of free entry visas for Pakistani pilgrims and increasing the number of people allowed to visit each year. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed his serious concern about travel agents

charging pilgrims excessive fees and ensured to take action against those breaking the law. He also requested the Iraqi government to consider the issue of permitting Pakistani pilgrims to keep their passports while in Iraq. The Iraqi ambassador assured full cooperation in making travel easier for Pakistani pilgrims and provided a list of travel agents who had been overcharging visitors. Minister Naqvi in response assured to take action against these agents within a week. The two sides also agreed to quickly finalize a visa waiver agreement for diplomats and officials from both countries. Additionally, Pakistan and Iraq are working on a deal that will make it easier for Pakistani workers to obtain work permits in Iraq. The Iraqi ambassador also congratulated Minister Naqvi on his new position and invited him to visit Iraq.

## Hamas says it has not withdrawn from ceasefire talks after latest Israeli attacks

NEWS DESK

GAZA STRIP: Hamas has not withdrawn from ceasefire talks after this weekend's deadly Israeli attacks in Gaza, one of the group's senior officials said on Sunday. The statement from Izzat El-Reshiq, a member of the political office of Hamas, also accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of trying to derail efforts by Arab mediators and the United States to reach a ceasefire deal, according to Reuters. The escalation in attacks by Netanyahu and his government aims to thwart efforts to end conflict, Reshiq said.

Conflicting reports emerged earlier on Sunday when a senior Hamas official told AFP Sunday that the Palestinian militant group has withdrawn from talks on a ceasefire in the Gaza war because of Israeli "massacres" and its attitude in negotiations. Another Hamas official said the group's military leader Mohammed Deif was "fine" and working despite Israel's huge bomb attack on a southern Gaza camp that it said targeted the wanted Hamas commander. Gaza's health ministry said the attack left 92 dead. The senior official quoted by AFP said Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh told international mediators Qatar and Egypt of the end of the talks on a ceasefire plan first outlined by US President Joe Biden in May. Haniyeh said Hamas would "halt negotiations due to the occupation's (Israel) lack of seriousness, continued policy of procrastination and obstruction, and the ongoing massacres against unarmed civilians," according to the official. "Hamas has shown great flexibility to reach an agreement and end the aggression and is ready to resume negotiations when the occupation government demonstrates seriousness in reaching a ceasefire agreement and a prisoner exchange deal.

## Russia blames Biden govt for atmosphere leading to Trump attack

Kremlin denies US role in Trump attack but condemns political violence, cites 'atmosphere' around him

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Sunday it did not believe the US administration was responsible for Saturday's assassination attempt on US presidential candidate Donald Trump, but that it had created an atmosphere that provoked the attack. Trump was shot in the ear during a rally in Pennsylvania, in an attack now being investigated as an assassination attempt. The attacker was shot dead and law enforcement officials said they had not yet identified a motive. "We do not believe that the attempt to eliminate and assassinate Trump was organised by the current authorities," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "But the atmosphere around candidate Trump ... provoked what America is confronting today." US President Joe Biden condemned the attack, saying there was no place for that kind of violence in America. Peskov said Russia condemned any violence in the course of the political struggle. His comments echoed those of some of Trump's Republican allies, who immediately pinned the blame on Biden. "After numerous attempts to remove candidate Trump from the political arena - using first legal tools, the courts, prosecutors, attempts to politically discredit and compromise the candidate - it was obvious to all outside observers that his life was in danger," Peskov said. He added that there were no plans for Putin to call Trump in light of the incident. - Agencies

## Islamabad Airport outsourcing update

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad International Airport outsourcing has been extended for the fourth time as outsourcing tender date has been extended to 16 September. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) informed the interested companies about the extension of the tender date. Privatization of Islamabad Airport under Public Private Partnership was completed. Islamabad International Airport serves the capital of Pakistan and acts as the gateway to the capital of the country and the northern areas of Pakistan. It was operationalized in 2018 after which airport operations were shifted from old airport (called Benazir Bhutto International Airport). It is located 30 km outside of the city and is easily accessible by road. The new airport marked an increase in capacity from 3 mpx to 9 mpx.

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